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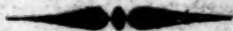
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Doctrine of the Trinity

CANDIDLY STATED:

BEING THE SUBSTANCE OF A CIRCULAR LETTER
FROM AN ASSOCIATION OF MINISTERS
ASSEMBLED AT OLNEY, BUCKS,
MAY, 28, 29, 1776.

ABRIDGED BY
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THE HISTORY OF THE

ROYAL SOCIETY OF LONDON

IN THE SEVENTEENTH CENTURY

BY JOHN DE LAET, ESQ.

IN TWO VOLUMES.

LONDON: Printed by J. DODD, in Pall-mall.

1765.

Vol. I.

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Vol. II.

Doctrine of the Trinity

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BEFORE we enter on the subject, it may be proper to premise the following things.—That the nature of God is incomprehensible: *Who by searching can find out God?*—That Jehovah is what cannot be explained or illustrated by any creature: in the whole extent of creation, there is no fit resemblance of him, nothing to which he may be compared.—Every objection, therefore, against his being what creatures are not, is impertinent; having no force, but upon the absurd supposition, that what the *Creator* is, the *creature* must be.

It is unreasonable to object to the truth of a doctrine, because of its mysterious nature: for, if *mystery* be incompatible with *reality*, no man living can be certain of any thing, no not of his own existence, much less of the existence of God: for mystery attends *matter* and *mind* through every modification. There is no part of the creation but what to man is mysterious as to its essence, the union of its parts, and its tendency towards, or influence upon others; yet none will chuse to say, “Creatures are more mysterious than the “Creator.” If there are innumerable mysteries in nature, it is unreasonable to expect there should be none in revelation, wherein the incomprehensible God is the subject treated of. The sublime mysteries contained in the scripture, are corroborating proofs of its divine original: they are not self-contradictory, not contrary to reason, though superior to its comprehension. In the doctrine we plead for, there is nothing

absurd. We do not say God is *one*, in the same sense in which he is *three*; nor *three*, in the same respect in which he is *one*. Neither do we pretend to believe what we have no proper information of, nor to understand that of which we have no conception. We believe and understand there are three persons in our adorable God, because we are so informed in the scriptures; but *how* these three persons subsist in one essence, we neither *know* nor *believe* any thing concerning it, the manner *how* not being revealed.— We believe what God has declared concerning himself, without daring to ask, *How can these things be?*

Some object to the word *person*, because, say they, the term is not used in scripture in reference to the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit; and plead for the Son and Holy Ghost, as distinct properties or powers of the divine nature. The word *property* is not scriptural, but the Father is called person, *Heb. i. 3*. And we read of the person of Christ. However, if the *idea* be found scriptural, the term will appear warrantable; for words are only sounds, by which ideas of things are conveyed. It may be proper before we proceed farther, to explain what we mean by the *terms* which we shall have occasion to use, in the discussion of the subject before us; for we do not chuse to deal in ambiguity, but endeavour after great plainness of speech, that the common reader may fully understand our design.

By *person*, we understand an intelligent agent, or one that acts with will, understanding and design, not adhering to another (which is the idea of a property) nor a part of another (as the body, or soul, is a part of a man :) but having a real subsistence by which it is distinguished from every other. By a *nature*, we understand that sameness which is essential to every person of the like kind. By a *being*, we understand oneness, or unity of existence.

That the divine Father is a person, we need not

spend time to prove, as few who believe a deity, deny his personality. This being taken for granted, we proceed to prove that the Son and Holy Ghost, are likewise persons.—that they are persons properly divine—that these three are the one living and true God—and briefly consider the importance of the doctrine, with its practical use.

That Christ is a *person*, and not a divine power or property, is abundantly evident from the following considerations, taken in close connection.

He is made known by personal names, as Jesus, Immanuel, Christ, &c. He speaks, and is spoken to, by personal pronouns, as I, thou, he, him, &c. He is possessed of personal properties, as understanding, will, affection, power, &c. He is invested with personal offices, as king, prophet, and priest. He stands in personal relations, and sustains personal characters, as son, husband, brother, shepherd, &c. He performs personal acts, *The Father worketh hitherto, and I work.*—He is the object of personal addresses: many are the instances of his being addressed as a person by his divine Father, by angels, devils, good men and bad men. He likewise receives personal honours of the highest kind; which leads us to consider his divinity, in connection with the idea of his personality; or, that he is a person properly divine.

In order to have a consistent view of Jesus Christ, it is proper to consider what the scripture speaks of him, as God, as man, and as Immanuel, God with us. He being God, became man, or took into union with himself human nature: for, *without controversy, great is the mystery of godliness, God manifested in the flesh:—The word was made flesh, and dwelt amongst us.* By *flesh*, which he was made, is intended man, or the whole of human nature; hence *flesh* and *man* are used as convertible terms, as in *Deut. v. 26. John xvii. 2.* As the Word was made flesh, or took upon him human nature, when that nature is spoken of, he is ne-

cessarily represented as inferior to the Father : hence Christ said, *my Father is greater than I* : but this does not prove his inferiority as a person, for his humanity is not a person, it never had a distinct subsistence of its own for a moment, but always did, and ever will, subsist in the divine person that assumed it; therefore it is called, *that holy thing*, Luke i. 35. Again, considering Christ as God-man, invested with office-capacity, he is represented as a servant, though he was a son, and as such did nothing of himself, but received commandment what he should say and do. These things the adversaries of Christ's divine personality frequently alledge, as proofs of his inequality with the Father : but who ever thought humanity equal to deity ? It is likewise allowed, a servant acts in a subordinate capacity ; but it cannot be from thence inferred, that he is of an inferior nature ; for if so, men cannot serve one another, but every man's master is at least an *angel*, and every servant of man, a *brute*. If Christ had not a nature superior to human, his appearing in the form of a servant could not be the effect of his condescension, which it is in scripture declared to be ; for there is no higher form than that of a servant, in which a mere creature may warrantably appear before God, unless we suppose a creature under no obligation to obey its Creator. But the blessed Jesus had a nature prior to his becoming a servant, from which obedience was not due : *Who being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God ; but made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men*, Phil. ii. 6, 7. If the *likeness of men*, and the *form of a servant*, denote that he was truly man, and really obeyed, what reason can be assigned why the *form of God*, does not intend his possessing a nature properly divine, especially as it is asserted, *He thought it no robbery to be equal with God* ? Had he been but a creature, it would not only have been robbery in

some kind and degree, but robbery of the most audacious nature, to claim an equality with God ; but Jesus thought such a claim no robbery at all ; and yet, amazing condescension ! he who was equal with God, became man, obeyed, and died.

Our holy wonder ought to be increased, by the contemplation of the many scriptural proofs of his divine personality, a few of which we shall select as follows :—He is declared to be, *the brightness of the Father's glory, and the express image of his person*, Heb. i. 3. If he be equal with God, as above-noted, and the express image of the Father's person, then he is a divine person, if the Father is one, because he is expressly the same with the Father, though distinct from him—Christ is often declared to be, *the Son of God,—his own Son,—his only begotten Son*, &c. And it is evident a son is a distinct person from his father, and yet, of the same nature with him. If Christ is called *the Son of man*, on the account of his having real humanity; his being called, *the Son of God*, is an equal proof of his true divinity. It can never be proved he is called, *the Son of man*, for any other reason than his being a partaker of proper humanity ; nor his being called, *the Son of God*, on any other account than what infers his personal divinity.—Christ is possessed of divine personal properties, as infinite, unlimited understanding ; hence Peter appealed to him as such, saying, *Lord, thou knowest all things, thou knowest that I love thee*, John xxi. 17. To search the heart is peculiar to God, *I the Lord search the heart, and declare unto man his thoughts—Thou only knowest the hearts of the children of men*, 2 Chron. vi. 30. Jesus knew what was in man ; he is a discernor of the thoughts and intents of the heart, and says, *All the churches shall know that I AM he which searcheth the reins and hearts*, Rev. ii. 23. He is a person possessed of infinite power, by which he upholdeth all things, Heb. i. 3. He is therefore called, *the mighty*

God, Isa. ix. 6. The most Mighty, Psal. xlv. 3. And himself hath proclaimed this truth, as with the voice of a great trumpet, saying, I am—the Almighty, Rev. i. 8. Devils tremble before him; diseases and death obey him; the furious elements instantly acknowledge his authority; the raging billows rest, the boisterous winds forbear to breathe, if he but say unto them, Peace, be still. We might here consider his immutability, immensity, eternity, &c. as properties of his divine person; but shall proceed to consider his divinity, as beaming forth in these offices, relations, &c. in which he stands to his church, for it appears undeniably evident, that office-capacity is a proof of real personality, seeing no idea can possibly be formed of any power or property, human or divine, being a prophet, king, husband, shepherd, &c. The properties of a shepherd, husband, king, &c. are easily understood; but to talk of a *property* being a king, &c. is folly in the extreme. If these offices demonstrate Christ's personality, and therein be discovered his real divinity, then he is a person truly divine. As a prophet he taught as never man did; for he bestowed a spiritual capacity, which none but God could do, as is devoutly acknowledged by John, in behalf of the saints, saying, *We know that the Son of God is come and hath given us an understanding*:—and concludes with holy exultation, *This is the true God, and eternal life*, 1 John v. 20.

The blood of the sin-atonement sacrifice, which as a priest he offered for pacifying offended justice, is called, *the blood of God*, Acts xx. 28. It is blood divine, as the nature offered as a sacrifice, was in union with the Son of God. From thence arose its value and virtue, to purchase and purify. *The blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin.* It is therefore emphatically called, *Precious blood*, 1 Pet. i. 19. Such things are never said of the blood of Abel, or Zacharias; nor such effects ascribed to the blood of any of the

bleſſed martyrs, though by it they ſealed their teſtimony in favour of the cauſe of God.

Infallible teſtimonies are borne to his divine dignity, conſidered as a king. The church looks to him as her incarnate God enthroned, ſaying, *Gird thy ſword upon thy thigh, O moſt mighty*, Pſal. xlv. 3. The eternal Father ſpeaking to his Son, ſays, *Thy throne, O God, is for ever, and ever*, Heb. i. 8.

Through his perſonal relations and characters, his divinity ſhines. He is the church's everlaſting Father, whoſe goings forth have been from of old, from everlaſting, *Iſa. ix. 6. Mic. v. 2.* To him the church is eſpouſed as a chaſte virgin, *2 Cor. xi. 2.* and called, *The bride, the Lamb's wife*, Rev. xxi. 9. And to her, as a woman grieved in ſpirit, the prophet was ſent with the following chearing meſſage, *Fear not—thy MAKER is thine huſband; Jehovah of hoſts is his name: and thy redeemer, the holy One of Iſrael, the God of the whole earth ſhall be called; and adds, With everlaſting kindneſs will I have mercy on thee, ſaith the Lord thy redeemer, Iſa. liv. 4,—8.*

A ſhepherd is a perſonal character. Jeſus acknowledged the character, ſaying, *I am the good Shepherd—I give my life for the ſheep.* He is called the *chief Shepherd*, *1 Pet. v. 4.* Yet the ſhepherd of Iſrael is frequently invoked by the name of *Jehovah, God of hoſts*, &c. Pſalm lxxx.

The perſonal acts of Chriſt, likewise prove his Divinity. On theſe he reſted the evidence of his Deity, in the days of his fleſh, *John x. 37, 38.* The miracles which he wrought, and the power he gave to his diſciples to work miracles in his NAME, were proofs of his claim to Deity in his own right. Pardon of ſin is an act of God: *Who can forgive ſins but God?* Chriſt forgave ſin. *Chriſt*, ſaith Paul, *forgave you*, Col. iii. 13. Perſons confer gifts; *The gift of God is eternal life*, Rom. vi. 23. *I*, ſaith Jeſus, *give unto them eternal life*, John x. 28. Salvation claims God as its au-

thor: *salvation is of the Lord*, Dan. ii. 9. *I, even I am the Lord, and besides me there is no Saviour*, Isa. xliii. 11. Christ is expressly called, *God our Saviour*, Tit. i. 3. Heaven is the kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. The saints look for him, as, *The great God, and our Saviour Jesus Christ*, Tit. ii. 13. *Neither is there salvation in any other*, Acts iv. 12. He only is the author of eternal salvation, *Heb. v. 9*. The name JESUS, was given him, because he should *save his people from their sins*, (Matt. i. 21.) which he is able to do to the very uttermost. He is therefore Jehovah; who says, there is no Saviour besides me, *Hof. xliii. 4*. Judging is a personal act; and none but a divine person can bring every secret thing into judgment. It is a small thing to be judged of man's judgment, who can only judge according to pearance; but that he that judgeth me, saith Paul, is the Lord, who will *bring to light the hidden things of darkness, and will make manifest the counsels of the heart*, 1 Cor. iv. 4, 5. For He (Christ) *searcheth the reins and hearts, and will give unto every one of you according to your works*, Rev. ii. 23. We must all stand before the judgment-seat of Christ. Then, in that day, it shall be said by all the saints, *Lo this is our God, we have waited for him, we will be glad, and rejoice in his salvation*, Isa. xxv. 9. Then will the sinners in Zion be afraid, *fearfulness will surprise the hypocrite; for every eye shall see him, and they also which pierced him: and all kindreds of the earth shall wail because of him*. But the whole family of heaven will, with calmness view the dreadful consternation of the wicked; and though many of their former acquaintances and relations be seen among the trembling croud, the saints will feel no distressing emotion, intirely acquiescing in his righteous procedure, will say, *Even so amen*, Rev. i. 7. Then the opposers of Christ's divinity will be obliged to acknowledge (oh! that they may obtain mercy to rejoice

in) this truth, that though *the Father judgeth no man, yet God is judge himself.* Selah, Psal. l. 6.

We shall only mention one act more, as demonstrative of Christ's personal Divinity, which is, *Creation.* This is expressly ascribed to the Lord Jesus, as well as to the Father: *For by him were all things created that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible whether they be thrones or dominions, or principalities, or powers: all things were created by him, and for him: and he is before all things, and by him all things consist,* Col. i. 16, 17. *All things were made by him, and without him was not any thing made that was made,* John i. 3. *The world was made by him; and the world knew him not,* ver. 10. The Father, speaking to him, saith, *Thou, Lord, in the beginning hast laid the foundation of the earth: and the heavens are the works of thine hands,* Heb. i. 10.—The opposers of the doctrine we plead for (in general) acknowledge creation to be a proof of Christ's distinct personality, yet deny his being a person properly divine. The Arians say, he is a person of a nature superior to angels, and inferior to God: that he was created by the Father, and employed in creation; and is to be worshipped as an inferior God. Thus their enmity to a plurality of divine persons in Jehovah, leads them to the heathenish doctrine of a plurality of gods, notwithstanding the solemn declarations of the Most High to the contrary: *Thus saith the Lord, the king of Israel, and his redeemer the Lord of hosts; I am the first, and I am the last; and besides me there is no God.—Is there a God besides me?—I know not any,* Isa. xlv. 6, 8. *Thou shalt have no other gods before me:—Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve.* The Apostle charges those with ignorance of God, who did service to them who by nature are no gods, Gal. iv. 8.

According to the Arians, Christ is not God by nature; therefore no service of a religious kind was

ever due to him, according to Paul's reasoning. Hence it follows, that Christ is either the true God, or properly no God at all. As Christ has not a divine nature, according to the Arians, neither has he the nature of man: they say he is of a nature superior to angels. Man is of a nature inferior to the angelic order: *Thou madest him*, says the Apostle, *a little lower than the angels*. As then the Arian-Christ is not by nature either God, angel, or man, we do not wonder the scriptures are so silent about him, for such a being perhaps existeth no where, but in their own imagination; which, doubtless, is a becoming residence for such a deity. Others, penetrated with a conviction that a plurality of persons were employed in creation, and not willing to admit a plurality of *divine* persons, have, like the Arians, substituted the idea of a creating creature, which they call the soul of Christ: though they acknowledge it to be of a nature vastly inferior to what the Arians imagine Jesus to be, yet think religious worship is its due. That Christ had a pre-existent nature, is evident; for, saith he, *Before Abraham was, I AM*: but that was not his soul, but his divine Person; for, *in the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word, was God. The same was in the beginning with God. He was with God, as a distinct person, and was God, being of the same nature and essence with the Father. This person, who was with God in the beginning, and was God, took upon him afterwards a nature, which he had not in the beginning; therefore it was not the human soul, for that did not take upon it any other different nature. It was an act of condescension in Christ, not to take upon him the nature of angels, but the seed of Abraham, the nature of man, which could not be said of the human soul, unless it be thought an act of condescension for an inferior nature not to assume a superior one: it is the same as saying, he must be a man of great humility, that is content*

with the nature in which is he created. Besides, how could Christ's human nature, with propriety, be said to take upon it human nature? But these difficulties vanish, if we take things as they are laid down in the word, that he that was God was made flesh, and dwelt among us, or became man; Immanuel, God with us. Besides, the soul of Christ was not a person, as has been noted: it being called a man, does not prove its personality; for the body of Adam was so called, as it is written, *The Lord God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul.* It is urged, that Christ is called the second man, the Lord from heaven; but this no more proves that the soul of Christ pre-existed in heaven, than its being said, *The first man was of the earth, earthy;* proves that Adam's soul pre-existed in the ground. But supposing his soul did pre-exist, its being employed in creation, seems contrary to reason and revelation; for it is reasonable to suppose the cause greater than the effect, the Creator greater than what is created by him; but unless a human soul be of a nature superior, or at least equal, to the heavenly host, the effect must be greater than the cause: an inferior nature may be raised to superior dignity, as is the case with the humanity of Jesus, as it stands in union with the Son of God, but the author of a superior nature it cannot be. If a creature could create, the worship of a creature would be not only excusable, but necessary; for it seems fit and every way right, for creatures to adore the author of their existence: but the great Apostle declares, that worship given to a creature is inexcusable, *Because that which may be known of God, is manifest in them; for God hath shewn it unto them. For the invisible things of him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even his eternal power and Godhead: so that they are without excuse,* Rom. i. 19, 20. But how

is eternal power, &c. clearly seen in creation, if a creature can create? Besides, the earliest creature once existed not: there was a period when itself was created: and if this creature created every thing, so that without it, was not any thing made, which was made, (which was the case respecting Christ) then this creating creature must have created itself, and exerted its powers before it had any, in order to have them; and have existed before it did exist. Such absurdities men run into, when they depart from the path of plain truth: but such there were in the Apostle's days, *who professing themselves to be wise, became fools*, Rom. i. 22. As a creature cannot be the cause, neither does it seem probable it could be an instrument in creation: a creating instrument must either be employed before the creature to be produced be created, or after: not before, because there was not any thing existing for an instrument to work upon, or be employed about: not after, because, when the creature is produced, it is too late for an instrument to be employed in creating it.

The work of creation seems to be of such a nature, as not to admit of the instrumentality of any one: however, the blessed Jesus was not an instrument, but, with the Father and Holy Ghost, the one efficient cause: for if no creature could create, and yet Christ created all things, then is the blessed Jesus a person truly divine. But let us appeal to scripture for a determination of this point, that though there were evidently a plurality employed in creation, yet whether the persons were not so united, as to be included in the only living and true God; or whether there was then with God any other being, as a *little God*, according to the Arians, or a *great man*, according to the new Sabellians. *Thus saith the Lord that created the heavens; God himself that formed the earth, and made it; he hath established it, he created it,—he formed it,—I am the*

Lord; and there is none else, Isa. xlv. 18. which ALONE spreadeth out the heavens, Job ix. 8. Thus saith the Lord thy redeemer, and he that formed thee from the womb; I am the Lord that maketh all things; that stretcheth out the heavens ALONE; that spreadeth abroad the earth BY MYSELF, Isa. xlv. 24. Thus it appears, from the personal acts of Christ, and particularly from *creation*, that he is a divine person, different from the Father, and yet, in nature and essence, one with him: *I and my Father are one*. As Christ is one with the Father, and, as such, the author of creation, the voice of reason proclaimeeth him worthy of the same honour: and revelation directs all men to *honour the Son, even as they honour the Father*, John v. 23. which is a further proof of Christ's personal Divinity: for if the Father be honoured as a divine person, and the same honour be due to the Son, the Son ought to be honoured by all, as a person truly divine. The honourable names, whereby true Deity is distinguished, and God the Father known, are applied to Christ in the scriptures of truth, as God, great God, mighty God, Lord God, God over all, the God of Israel, the God of Abraham, the God of the whole earth, Jehovah, Adonai [Lord], Lord of hosts, King of kings, Lord of lords, I am that I am, Alpha and Omega, First and Last, All in All, &c. Again, It is very observable, that Christians of old were distinguished from others in every place, by their calling on the name of Jesus Christ our Lord, see 1 Cor. i. 2. Acts ix. 14,—17. *I said, O my God, take me not away in the midst of my days: thy years are throughout all generations. Of old hast thou laid the foundation of the earth, and the heavens are the work of thy hands. They shall perish,—they shall be changed: but thou art the same, and thy years shall have no end.* Psal. cii. 24,—27. Which psalm is entitled, “A prayer of the afflicted, when he is overwhelmed, and poureth out his complaint before

“ the Lord.” Yet in *Heb.* i. 10,—12. it is expressly applied to our Lord Jesus Christ; so that he is the Lord, to whom the afflicted and overwhelmed pour out their complaint: agreeable to which, Stephen, when stoned, died, calling upon God, saying, *Lord Jesus, receive my spirit:—Lord, lay not this sin to their charge,* Acts vii. 59, 60. But if Jesus Christ be not God the Lord, the holy psalmist, and the author of the epistle to the Hebrews, were guilty of an horrid sin, in directing the afflicted to apply for relief to a mere creature; and Stephen the famous martyr, died in the very act of idolatry; and the primitive christians were distinguished in every place, for their invariable attachment to an idol. Christ and his apostles were corrupters of religion, rather than reformers, if Jesus was not a divine person; for instead of the idols being abolished by them, as was predicted, *Zech.* xiii. 2. *Isa.* ii. 10,—22. they established an idolatry of the most dangerous kind.—Further, Christ is likewise the saint’s trust. *We* (viz. the apostles) *trusted in Christ. In whom ye also trusted, after ye heard the word of truth,* Eph. i. 12, 13. *And in his name shall the Gentiles trust,* Matt. xii. 21. One prophet says, *Cease from man,—wherein is he to be accounted of?* *Isa.* ii. 22. Another, *Cursed be the man that trusteth in man, and maketh flesh his arm,* Jer. xvii. 5. A third, when speaking of Christ, says, *Blessed are all they that put their trust in him,* Psal. ii. 12. Which surely proves to a demonstration, that the saints were all deluded, if Jesus is not truly divine.

It is very desirable to know what those who were so attached to Christ on earth, think and say about him now they are in heaven, where every mistake is rectified, and with whom the angelic host unite. We are favoured with authentic intelligence of this in the Revelation. John, the beloved disciple, being *in the spirit on the Lord’s day, heard a great voice behind him, as of a trumpet, saying, I am Alpha and Omega, the first*

and the last ; what thou seest, writ in a book, and send it unto the churches.—He turned to see who it was that spake to him, and behold, it was his ascended Jesus, loudly proclaiming his own dignity and authority. John was all attention, and being introduced to the portal of glory, he saw the happy attendants of the heavenly sovereign round about the throne, and the number of them was, *Ten thousand times ten thousand, and thousands of thousands, saying with a loud voice, Worthy is the Lamb that was slain, to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honour, and glory, and blessing.* And every creature in heaven, earth, and sea, he heard in sweet concord, saying, *Blessing, honour, glory, and power, be unto him that sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb, for ever and ever, see Rev. i. 10, 11. and chap. v. 12, 13.* It seems as if none but the inhabitants of hell will at last be found reluctant to honour and give glory to our dear Immanuel. But all the redeemed of the Lord with everlasting joy upon their heads shall sing, *Unto him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood, and hath made us kings and priests unto God and his Father ; to him be glory and dominion, for ever and ever. Amen.*

We now proceed to consider the divine personality of the Holy Ghost, which is by many denied in our day. There are two contrary methods taken to oppose this precious article of your faith. Some acknowledge his *personality*, but deny his *divinity* ; and assert that he is a creature created by Christ, and so inferior to him, though superior to angels. In answer to this, we refer you to what is said above, relating to a supposed super-angelic creature. Others deny his personality, and say, that by the Holy Ghost is intended the energy or power of God. That the extraordinary operations, or works and gifts of God, are sometimes called the *Holy Ghost*, we readily grant ; but that supposeth the personal existence of the Holy Ghost, as the author of them. Would the law ever have been called *Moses*, if there

never had been such a person as Moses by whom it it was given? no; nothing more unlikely.

That the Holy Ghost is a person, appears evidently from the following considerations. He is the subject of power, of knowledge, of will or choice, of affection, as love, grief, anger:—speaks, and is spoken to:—is sent, and sends others. He is the subject of power:—we frequently read of the power of the Holy Ghost. Paul did many mighty signs and wonders, by the power of the Spirit of God, *Romans* xv. 19. And the blessed saints *abound in hope, through the power of the Holy Ghost*, *Rom.* xv. 13. *For our gospel came not unto you in word only, but also in power, and in the Holy Ghost*, *1 Thes.* i. 5. He is possessed of a mind: *The mind of the Spirit*, *Rom.* viii. 27. And is the subject of knowledge, *The things of God knoweth no man but the Spirit.*—And of will or choice; Paul speaking of the diversity of gifts for the churches edification, says, *All these worketh that one and the self same spirit, dividing to every man severally as he will*, *1 Cor.* xii. 11. Hence the advice sent by the Gentile churches, *seemed good to the Holy Ghost*, *Acts* xv. 28.—Speech, properly considered, is a personal act. *Now the Spirit speaketh expressly*, *1 Tim.* iv. 1. *The Spirit entered into me, and set me upon my feet, and spake with me, and said unto me, Go, &c.* *Ezek.* iii. 24. He speaks with design and authority, which implies personality. *The Spirit said unto Philip, Go join thyself to this chariot*, *Acts.* viii. 29. *And while Peter thought on the vision, the Spirit said unto him, Behold, three men seek thee. Arise therefore and get thee down, and go with them, doubting nothing: for I have sent them*, *Acts* x. 19, 20. The Holy Ghost said, *Separate me Barnabas and Saul, for the work whereunto I have called them*, *Acts.* xiii. 2. *They were forbidden of the Holy Ghost to preach the word in Asia*, *Acts* xvii. 6. Agreeable to which is Paul's solemn charge to the elders, *Feed the flock of God, over which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers*, *Acts* xx. 28. The same great apostle intreats

a share in the prayers of the saints, for the Lord Jesus Christ's sake, and *the love of the Spirit*, Rom. xv. 30. And speaks of him as one with whom believers have fellowship, *Phil.* ii. 1. Which implies he is a person and not a property; and therefore he particularly cautions the saints against grieving him, *Ephesians* iv. 30. For it went ill with Israel when they rebelled and vexed him, *Isaiah* lxiii. 10. In a word, he helpeth and assisteth the infirmities of the saints, makes intercession in them, guides them into all truth, comforts them in trouble, and seals them unto the day of redemption. These things prove his personality: and that he is a person *distinct* from the Father and the Son, is clear from his being called ANOTHER Comforter, *sent by* the Father and the Son. *He* (the Father) *bath sent his Spirit into your hearts. I will pray the Father, saith Christ, and he will send you another comforter.* Again, *I will send him unto you*, John xvi. 7. He who is sent is certainly a distinct person from him or them by whom he is sent: agreeable to which Christ said, *When the Spirit of truth is come, he will guide you into all truth: for he shall not speak of himself, but whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he speak: and he will shew you things to come. He shall glorify me, for he shall receive of mine, and shall shew it unto you.* How very often is the Holy Ghost spoken of in this sixteenth chapter of John, by the personal pronoun, *he*, as a person *distinct* from the Father and the Son, who sent him and speaks of him.

That the Holy Ghost is a divine person, appears equally evident also from the following things.—

Baptism, a solemn act of religious worship, is commanded to be performed in his name, as well as in the name of the Father and the Son. Creation is ascribed to the divine Spirit. For by him were the heaven's garnished, *Job* xxvi. 13. He moved upon the face of the waters: and saith Elihu, *The Spirit of God hath made me*, *Job* xxxiii. 4. Again, the Holy Ghost is called God: *Why hath Satan filled thine heart to lie*

to the Holy Ghost? saith the apostle to the deceiver : *Why hast thou conceived this thing in thine heart? thou hast not lied unto men, but unto God.* Moreover, when Peter defended his conduct in going to the Gentiles, he rested his defence on this, *The Spirit bade me go :* and concludes, *What was I, that I could withstand God?* Acts xi. 12,—17. Saints are called, *The temple of God : The temple of God is holy, which temple ye are,* 1 Cor. iii. 16. *Know ye not that your bodies are the temple of the Holy Ghost?* 1 Cor. vi. 19. And it is well known that a temple is ever considered as the residence of Deity. He is omniscient, *For the Spirit searcheth all things,* 1 Cor. ii. 10. Omnipresent, *Psal. cxxxix. 7.* Eternal, *Heb. ix. 14.* Is the object of prayer. *The Lord direct your hearts into the love of God, and into the patient waiting for Christ,* 2 Thes. iii. 5. And very significant is the apostle's benediction, *2 Cor. xiii. 14. The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Ghost, be with you all. Amen.*

We may farther observe, that if there are three persons in God, as appears evident, for the reasons before given, it is natural to expect that Jehovah will be found in scripture speaking of himself, or spoken of in such a manner as includes a plurality. If on examination, nothing of that kind could be met with in the sacred volume, a lover of truth might be kept in a state of hesitation : but no objection of that nature can be brought against the doctrine, for many are the instances of such a mode of speaking in scripture, as are not only agreeable to a plurality of persons in God, but which are incapable of any other construction : a few of which we shall mention. Passing by the many plural names given the Almighty, joined with singular verbs, which are much to our purpose, we shall only mention such instances as are plain to the most common capacity, as *Gen. i. 26. And God said, Let us make man in our image, after our likeness.* The pronouns *us* and *our*, denote a plurality, or more than one,

whose *image* and *likeness* is the *same*; or a plurality of persons, and one God, it being evident that God, and none else, was employed in creation. The like mode of speech is used in *Gen.* iii. 22. Again, in *Gen.* xi. 7. *The Lord said let us go down, and there confound their language. So the Lord scattered the people,* ver. 8. *Isaiah* says, *I saw also the Lord sitting upon a throne, high and lifted up, and his train filled the temple: Also I heard the voice of the Lord, saying, Whom shall I send, and who will go for us? Then said I, Here am I; send me, And he said, Go, &c.* *Isa.* vi. 1,—9. The pronouns *I* and *he*, discover unity, or that there is but one God, one divine Being; but the pronoun, *us*, conveys the idea of a plurality. And when that very commission which was given to *Isaiah* was recited by *John*, he declares, that *these things said Esaias when he saw his* (Christ's) *glory, and spake of him,* see *John* xii. 41. And what the prophet declares, was spoken by the Lord of hosts whom he saw, see *Acts* xxviii. 25,—27. *Well spake the Holy Ghost, by Esaias the prophet, &c.* Therefore the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, were the *us*, whose messenger the prophet was; even *the King, the Lord of hosts.* In *Isaiah* xli. 21,—23. the holy One of Israel, the Creator, is speaking to false deities, after this manner, *Produce your cause, saith the Lord; bring forth your strong reasons, saith the King of Jacob. Let them shew the former things what they be, that WE may consider them, and know the latter end of them; or declare US things for to come. Shew the things that are to come hereafter, that WE may know that ye are gods: yea, do good or do evil, that WE may be dismayed, and behold it together.* In verse 25. the Lord again useth the singular pronoun, *I, I have raised him up, &c.* In like manner the watcher who ordered *Nebuchadnezzar* to be cut down as a spreading tree, is called *the watchers,* *Dan.* iv. 13, 14, 17. And in chap. v. 18. it is said, *The most high God gave to Nebuchadnezzar a kingdom and majesty, and glory: It is added, And THEY took*

his glory from him, ver. 20. Yet it is plain, that none but the great God who gave him the glory, took it away, as the humbled monarch acknowledged. In many more passages, a plurality in God appears, such as, *The Lord rained upon Sodom and Gomorrah brimstone and fire, FROM the Lord out of heaven*, Gen. xix. 24. *O, our God, hear the prayer of thy servant, for the Lord's sake*, Dan. ix. 17. *I will have mercy upon the house of Judah, and will save them by the Lord their God.—The Father raiseth up the dead, and quickeneth them; even so the Son quickeneth whom he will*, John v. 21. *It is the Spirit that quickeneth—our mortal bodies*, John vi. 63. Rom. viii. 11. It is God who quickeneth all things, 1 Tim. vi. 13. From these testimonies it plainly appears to us, that *there are three that bear record in heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost: and these three are one*, 1 John v. 7. They are sufficiently distinct to denominate them three persons, and so closely united as to be one God. Agreeable to the solemn declaration, *Hear, O Israel! the Lord thy God is one Lord. To whom be glory for ever. Amen.*

Had Christ not been a divine person, he could not have atoned for sin; for the redemption of a man's soul is precious, and it ceaseth for ever, in respect of its being accomplished by any of the mere human race: *None of them can by any means redeem his brother, or give to God a ransom for him*, Psal. xlix. 7, 8. Sin hath incurred the displeasure of God, which is infinite displeasure. His wrath is so intense, no mere creature could sustain it. Infinite punishment in respect of duration, is the demerit of every transgression. Therefore the following interrogation, may be justly addressed to every sinner, *Is not thy wickedness great, and thine iniquities infinite?* Job xxii. 5. How valuable then must the price of redemption be, which merits an exemption from punishment, not of one sinner only, but of ten thousand times ten thousand, and thousands of thousands; the transgressions of each one of them being more

than the hairs of their heads, which cannot be numbered. Let others plead, if they please, for redemption procured by a mere creature; we will sing with the church of old, *As for our Redeemer, the Lord of hosts is his name, the Holy one of Israel*, Is. xlvii. 4.

Was not our Jesus a person truly divine, he would not only have been extremely deficient, as to merit, attending his blood and righteousness; but likewise utterly incapable of a full acquaintance with his people, their numerous enemies, wants, and miseries: or to render them happy, either here or hereafter. For every creature is circumscribed, or bounded, in all respects. A creature cannot be every where at the same time. To fill heaven and earth, is the underived and uncommunicable property of God. *Do not I fill heaven and earth, saith the Lord?* but how would that prove Jehovah's deity, if a creature could rise up and say, *and so do I*. It would quite confound finite powers to attend to the many thousands of millions that are perpetually addressing him in heaven, crying to him by night and day from every part of the earth, and to watch every motion, and take cognizance of every thought and action, of friends and foes, through the vast empires of heaven, earth and hell. How could a mere creature—Christ do all this, and infinitely more? but Jesus being a divine person, he *can* and *will* make good his promise to bless and be with his people where ever they meet in his name; and will never leave the meanest individual that trusts in him: to each he says, *I will not leave thee*; and to his whole church and collective interest, ministers and people, he saith, *Lo! I am with you always to the end of the world. Amen*. It need not give us pain how to let the Saviour know our sorrows and wants. He hears the groans of the prisoners, yea, is a discernor of the thoughts and intents of the heart. He knows how to sympathize and succour, guide, govern, seek and save. Every whisper reaches his ear, and every sigh his heart. He is acquainted with every design formed on earth against his people, or in the dark

world of hell.—He knows how to deliver the godly out of temptation, or support them in it, and profit them by it.

To conclude. Let us ever keep in view our obligations to the sacred Three. How glorious the Father's love! *God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son, &c. Behold what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us.* How great, and manifold, our obligations to Jesus Christ! *He gave himself for us.—He died, the just, for the unjust, that he might bring us to God.—He came to save the lost.—He was manifested to destroy the works of the devil.—We have boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus.* We ought then with thankfulness and humility, to examine and admire his character, offices and works. To unite with him in his gracious and holy designs, and so to acquaint ourselves with him, that he may be the foundation of our happiness, and that all our powers may unite in cordial, universal, and perpetual obedience to him.—The office and work of the Holy Spirit, ought likewise to engage and fix our attention. He is the author of the holy scriptures: *Holy men spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost. He is the Lord God of Israel, who spake by the mouth of his holy prophets, which have been since the world began, Luke i. 68, 70.* He is the spirit of truth and holiness. He only can direct our hearts into the love of the Father, and into a patient waiting for Jesus Christ. It is by him we have access to the Father, through the Mediator. But we have reason to rejoice that God, even our Father, hath promised to give the Holy Spirit to them that ask him. Let us then earnestly ask, that we may receive the Holy Ghost: that he may create a clean heart, and renew a right spirit within us. If we thus attend to the doctrine of the Trinity, as a doctrine according to godliness, we may be assured that the *grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Ghost, will ever be with us.* Amen.